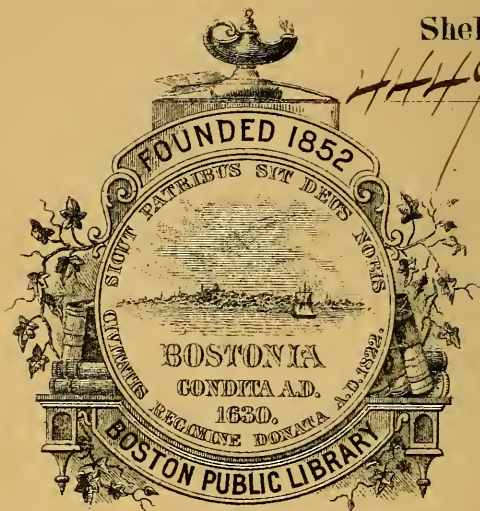




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Exhibition of the
Important Oil Painting

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Washington and his Family

By

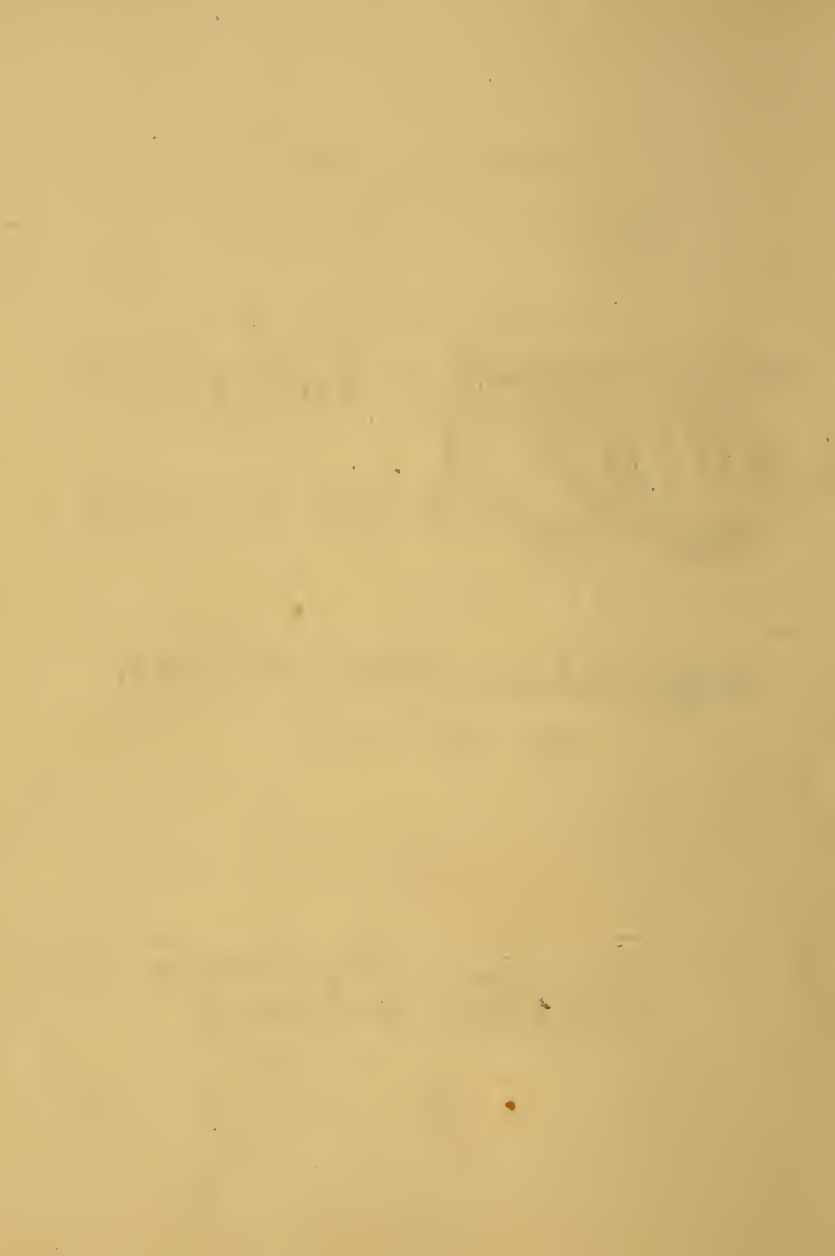
Edwin Savage, of Princeton, Mass.

Born 1761, Died 1817



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See inside for extracts from different publications
and copies of letters about the painting



EXHIBITION OF THE
IMPORTANT OIL PAINTING

(9 FEET LONG, 6 FEET 9 INCHES HIGH),

WASHINGTON
 AND HIS FAMILY,

BY
EDWARD SAVAGE,

OF PRINCETON, MASS.

BORN 1761, DIED 1817.



AVERY GALLERIES,
368 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW-YORK, NEAR 35TH ST.
DECEMBER, 1892.

S. F. Avery, Jr.

Dec: 30, 1892.



Note.

It is very interesting to observe the various opinions and differences about this picture by Savage, by writers who had few or no opportunities for seeing the painting itself, or the print after it. Dunlap evidently received his information about this artist and his work from outside and prejudiced sources, and certainly had no good ground for his vindictive criticism.

The picture was probably first publicly shown in New-York City, and afterward

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transferred to Boston, Mass., where it remained for some time in the New England Museum. From this place it was removed in 1840 to the old Boston Museum, on Tremont street.

In this latter building it was hung—one can hardly say seen, because from its exalted position, over the main entrance, and the very poor light which got to it from distant side windows, it was extremely difficult to more than make out parts of the composition.

Here it was for over fifty years, accumulating dust and dirt, while thousands of people passed beneath it without knowing of its existence or its author.

The best authorities give Savage the credit of getting “a truthful if not flat-

tering rendering of his subject." He had various opportunities of meeting Washington, and painted him "from life, several times during the year 1790." Also, "the portraits of Washington, as given in these prints, possess an air of truthfulness and individuality, which warrants the assertion that the artist was faithful to his original."

Regarding the prints, Mr. W. S. Baker, of Philadelphia, an eminent authority on this subject, says that Dunlap's information was "manifestly incorrect," and "the assertion that David Edwin was the real engraver is proved to be an error."

The old frame is still on the picture, and both it and the painting have been put in good condition. S. P. A., Jr.

Copy of letter from Moses Kimball, Esq.

BROOKLINE, MASS., Dec. 28, 1891.

S. P. AVERY, Jr., Esq.

My Dear Sir: I am just in receipt of your favor of 26th inst. I regret that I cannot give you much of a genealogy of the picture of "Washington's Family" by Savage. It has been in my possession something more than fifty years, and came to me in the collection of the New England Museum that I purchased, and to which I have understood it went direct from Savage.

Respectfully, etc.,

(Signed) MOSES KIMBALL.

WASHINGTON AND HIS FAMILY

Copy of letter from John Sartain, Esq.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., May 12, 1892.

Mr. S. P. AVERY, Jr.

Dear Sir: Yours of the 10th inst. is before me. In answer to your inquiries I have to say that the plate I did of Savage's "Washington Family" was begun considerably over half a century ago, and was copied from a wretched lithograph brought to me by a man named Fessenden, who ordered the plate.

The original stipple engraving published by Savage, who painted the picture, bears the painter's name as the engraver, I think. But it was the work of David Edwin, with whom I was inti-

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mate from the fall of 1830 till his death in 1841, on the birthday of Washington.

Beside General and Martha Washington, the picture contains portraits of George Washington Parke Custis, Eleanor Custis, and their negro man William Lee. The background is a view on the Potomac. The map, the plan of Washington City. Savage claimed to be the painter, engraver, plate-printer, and publisher of the work. Yours truly,

(Signed) JOHN SARTAIN.

John Sartain was born in London, England, October 24, 1808, and has lived since 1830 in Philadelphia.

One of the Sartain prints is now on exhibition with the original painting.

WASHINGTON AND HIS FAMILY

Copy of letter from Charles H. Savage, Esq.

CHICAGO, ILL., Nov. 23, 1892.

My Dear Mr. Avery:

Your favor of the 21st inst. at hand. I was very glad to learn that you had purchased my grandfather's painting of the "Washington Family." My impression is that it was painted about 1796 at Philadelphia; the engraving from it was published at Philadelphia in 1798—so the copy that I own states. He afterward carried it to Boston, and hung it in the old "New-York Museum" there; the name was later changed to "Boston Museum." It has remained at the two museums at least eighty years. This

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painting shows General Washington, his wife, Martha Washington, and her two grandchildren, George Washington Parke Custis and Eleanor Custis, also the general's old body-servant Billy Lee.

The copy that I have of the engraving from it, published in 1798, is inscribed as follows, viz.: "*The Washington Family, George Washington, his Lady and her two grandchildren by the name of Custis.*" And the French, "*La Famille de Washington son Epouse et ses deux petits Enfants du nom de Custis.*" He made a large sum of money from the sale of these engravings, France and the United States being on such good terms, and Washington dying the next year. Robert Wilkinson, London, also published

the engraving at the same time. In 1840 John Sartain, Philadelphia, published another engraving from the painting.

My impression is that the likeness of Washington in your painting was copied from the panel owned by me, as grandfather always said it was the best likeness of Washington that he had painted, and the likeness in my engraving of your picture is a perfect copy of my panel. Probably the likeness of Martha Washington was taken from the portrait he painted of her for John Adams in 1790, as it is a good copy of her face as printed in Bowen's "History of the Centennial Celebration of Washington's Inauguration," published last spring.

I do not know that the above is a fact,

but it is my deduction from comparison of the faces.

The portrait of Washington sent to you last fall, to be put in order, etc., was painted by grandfather in 1793 at Philadelphia. I think it is signed on the column at the right of the picture, "E. Savage, 1793," and was painted from life. He made a Mezzotint engraving from it, but it is not a good copy. There is a copy of it at the "Metropolitan Art Museum," one at the old "State House," Boston, and I think one in the Lenox Library, New-York.

I have heard my father say that this panel was taken from the door of a state coach of King George Third. The coach had been damaged, and was being

broken up; my grandfather, being in London at the time, secured this panel, using it later for the "Washington" portrait.

Besides the above portrait, he painted two others of Washington from life, one for Harvard College in 1790. It now hangs in Memorial Hall; Miss E. B. Johnston gives a full account of it in "Original Portraits of Washington."

He painted another in 1790 from life for John Adams, afterward President; at the same time he painted Martha Washington's portrait. These two paintings are now in possession of Mrs. Charles Francis Adams, Quincy, Mass.

He painted the portraits of many of the prominent men of his day, copies of

the faces being in his "Historical Painting of the *Signers of the Declaration of Independence*," owned by Yale College. The best Mezzotint of his that I have seen is a copy of Martin's painting of Franklin.

I know very little of the personal history of grandfather. He was born at Princeton, Mass., 1761, died there in 1817, was married in 1794 to Sarah Leava of Boston. He studied in London under West, afterward going to the continent, spending considerable time at Florence and other cities of Italy. He enjoyed a country life, and had a fine farm of some eight hundred acres at Princeton, Mass., where he kept open house for his friends. While in Florence he painted a copy of

WASHINGTON AND HIS FAMILY

Columbus, from the portrait in the collection of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. This copy has been lost sight of, but he made an engraving from it, of which I have a copy; it is inscribed "*Landing of Christopher Columbus on the Morning of October 12, 1492.*" The portrait of Columbus is copied from the original picture in the collection of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Florence, painted and engraved by E. Savage, January 4, 1800.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) CHAS. H. SAVAGE.

S. P. AVERY, Jr., Esq., New-York.

Extract from "The Engraved Portraits of Washington," by W. S. Baker, Philadelphia, 1880, pages 73-77.

Edward Savage, Painter and Engraver in the Mezzotint and Stipple manner, was born at Princeton, Mass., in the year 1761. His original calling was that of a goldsmith, which, however, he relinquished for portrait-painting and engraving.

Having offered to execute a portrait of Washington as a gift to Harvard College, to be placed in the Philosophy Chamber, the President, at the request of that Institution, sat to him in the city of New-York, three times, as appears by the following entries in his diary:

“Monday 21st (Dec. 1789). Sat from ten to one o’clock for a Mr. Savage, to draw my portrait for the University of Cambridge.”

“Monday 28th. Sat all the forenoon for Mr. Savage, who was taking my portrait.”

“Wednesday 6th (Jany. 1790). Sat from half after 8 o’clock till ten for the portrait painter, Mr. Savage, to finish the picture which he had begun for the University of Cambridge.”

This Portrait was afterward engraved by the artist himself in the Stipple manner.

Savage went abroad the following year, and studied for a time in London, under Benjamin West, and afterward visited

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Italy. He subsequently practised at Philadelphia and New-York. Edward Savage died at his native place in July, 1817. An examination of the prints bearing the name of E. Savage as painter and engraver, leads to the conclusion that the statements made by William Dunlap, in his sketch of the artist ("Arts of Design," Vol. I, page 321), and which were evidently furnished by that erratic genius, John Wesley Jarvis, a pupil of Savage's, are manifestly incorrect. The assertion that David Edwin was the real engraver of these works, is proved to be an error, from the fact that the first and third mentioned prints in the list (Baker's) were published in London, respectively, in the years 1792 and 1793, and that

Edwin was not known as an engraver until his arrival in Philadelphia in December, 1797, being then about twenty-one years of age. Moreover, one is executed in Mezzotint, a method which he never practised, and the other, although in Stipple, is entirely different in manner from that of Edwin, whose style is well known.

What works Jarvis refers to, when he says "that he made all his master's pictures, engraved them, printed them, and delivered them to customers," is not apparent, for besides those enumerated below, no other prints bearing the name of Savage as painter and engraver are known (at least to the writer), except one of General Knox, published in London,

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December, 1791, executed in the Stipple manner.

The statement that Edwin engraved "The Washington Family," published in 1798, and that Jarvis assisted him, is also made; but the work resembles closely the head of 1792, and although in some respects the drawing is open to criticism, yet it is a well-executed print.

The portrait of Washington, as given in these prints, possesses an air of truthfulness and individuality, which warrants the assertion that the artist was faithful to his original, and in sympathy with a character whose dignity he felt, so far as was in his power, must be preserved.

No. 120, Savage.

The Washington Family. George Washington, his Lady, and her two Grandchildren by the name of Custis. *La Famille de Washington. George Washington son Espouse et ses deux petits Enfants du nom de Custis.* Full figure, in military costume, seated to the left of the print. His right arm rests on the shoulder of the boy who is standing, while the left is upon a chart extended on a table, to a part of which Mrs. Washington points her fan. . . . *Stipple.*

Height 18 6-16 inches; length 24 6-16 inches. Painted and engrav'd by E. Savage. *Publish'd March 10th, 1798, by*

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E. Savage & Robt. Wilkinson, No. 58 Cornhill, London. Rare.

One of these prints is now on exhibition with the original painting.



Extracts from "Original Portraits of Washington," by Elizabeth Bryant Johnston, Boston, 1882, pages 44-46. Facing page 46 is a full-page reproduction of the original painting of Washington and his family.

Edward Savage was born at Princeton in the "Old Bay State." He was a

goldsmith until after his marriage, when he became interested in art, and finally adopted the profession of portrait-painting and engraving. He studied for a time with West, and spent some months in Italy. He was never a superior artist, but his three portraits of Washington compare favorably with the works of those having more reputation and greater pretension; giving a truthful if not flattering rendering of his subject.

Mr. Savage lived for a number of years in Philadelphia, where he painted Washington from life several times during the year 1790. The first portrait was of cabinet size, which he retained. It is now in the possession of his granddaughters, who are artists living in Fitchburg,

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Mass.¹ . . . Savage painted full size (probably from life, as he had opportunities for doing so) the well-known "Family Group at Mount Vernon," which was long familiar to the visitors at the New-York Museum, which this artist established.² For many years this composition was thought to have been destroyed by fire in New-York. It is, however, in the gallery of the Boston Museum, placed immediately over the entrance to the theatre, where it has been

¹ This picture is now owned by Chas. H. Savage, Esq., Chicago, Ill. The size is 14x18, painted on wood, and signed "E. Savage, 1793."

² William Dunlap, in his "History of the Arts of Design in the United States," New-York, 1834, page 321, says: "He had a kind of Museum and picture gallery in Greenwich Street, in a building once used as a circus."

for two generations. The painting is in a fair state of preservation; and the owner, Mr. Moses Kimball, says:

“It came into my possession in 1840, with the collection of the New England Museum. We understood that Savage painted it for a gallery he then had, which was located, as I have been told, in Boylston Hall, over the Boylston Market, corner of Boylston and Washington streets. It was eventually merged with the New England Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts.”

Washington, in uniform, is seated by a table, on which is spread the plan of the “Capital City,” and his right arm rests on the shoulder of his adopted son. Mrs. Washington sits opposite, and

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points with her fan to the chart. By her side is Nelly Custis, and Billy Lee, the well-known colored servant, is just entering a door at the back. It is a very interesting domestic scene; the group is seated on the portico, and the broad Potomac is seen in the background.

The portraits of both the General and Mrs. Washington are strong and uncompromising; while the satin robe of the lady is given with a delicacy that challenges noted painters of drapery. An engraving made by the artist of this group was extensively published. It bears the quaint inscription: "The Washington family — George Washington, his Lady, and her two grandchildren by the

name of Custis. Painted and engraved by E. Savage."

The plate is ascribed by some to David Edwin, who was associated with Savage; but we think this unjust to both artists. Edwin, who was a famous story-teller, related to John Sartain an incident concerning the painting, which indicates that the plate was commenced some years before the print was published, which was not until 1798. Mr. Sartain, who, supposing the painting to have been destroyed, reproduced the plate, says:

"I only know that the engraving was really copied from a painting by a humorous description that David Edwin gave me of a journey from Philadelphia

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to Burlington, N. J., in an open rowboat, with that troublesome picture along. The plate was in progress here in Philadelphia, when, the yellow fever breaking out, Savage and Company departed for Burlington by way of the river. He would not have the canvas taken off the stretcher and rolled, and it was large enough to be almost unmanageable when the wind blew. It was one of the oddest things imaginable to see and hear Edwin describe and act his skillful holding of the canvas so as to keep it edgewise to the wind with exact nicety. Then his energetic struggle with it when the wind caught either side, etc. . . . ”

In Mrs. Washington's will is a clause bequeathing “to Eleanor Parke Lewis a

print of the Washington family in a box in the garret." . . . One of these engravings, now owned by Mrs. Anna S. Walton, of Fairfax County, Virginia, has this inscription on the back: "Presented to Mrs. Elizabeth Washington by George Washington Parke Custis, July 4, 1802."

The painting has been purchased by Wm. F. Havemeyer, Esq., of New-York.





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